

## Rotherfield St Martin June Report Jo Evans

June has been a very exciting month for us with plenty of activities and good news! We are delighted to announce that we have received grants from Lloyds TSB to help pay some of our core costs and from Awards for All towards the purchase of new computers. These will be used for our classes at the Village Hall and at RSM Centre where we hope to open an internet café. This good news has been a great encouragement to us as we look at the next stage of development.

June started with an afternoon of Scottish dancing with Cynthia McIntosh and friends. We heard about the history of this dancing and then watched some nimble demonstrations before some of us getting up to have a go! A fun time was had by all. We then had a trip to Scotney Castle for the launch of our joint art project. The weather was very kind to us despite the forecast and we enjoyed a superb talk by Adam Gray, one of the gardeners, a walk round the grounds and wonderful refreshments in the café. The project starts properly on September 16<sup>th</sup> at the Village Hall where the Head gardener will be there start us off.

We then enjoyed a beautiful afternoon out at the home of Mary Howells. Mary has a delightful garden and many folk took the opportunity to walk round and see all the work she had put in before our visit. There was a chance to play croquet and also to catch up with friends over tea and cakes. Thank you, Mary, for a super afternoon.

This was followed by something completely different when Brenda Spiers a trained 'Laughter' therapist came to explain and demonstrate how laughter is essential to good health. We engaged in a number of 'silly' exercises designed to help breathing and promote laughter.

The final activities, 'Music in the Garden' and the visit by Crowborough Fire Service will be reported next month.

Exercise and computer classes have continued and we completed the first digital photography course run by RSM. Bridge afternoons are becoming very popular and we hope to offer a beginners session in the autumn.

July is a busy month (see diary) with an afternoon out to Beacon Cottage in North St, a visit from Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), a trip to the Opera House in Tunbridge Wells for an afternoon of Gilbert & Sullivan and of course the ever popular 'Holiday at Home'.

Rotherfield St Martin will be closed from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August. A lot of work will be taking place at RSM Centre as we reorder our premises and extend into further rooms at Carisbrooke.

Financing our core costs is the biggest challenge at present as our Big Lottery Grant ends in December. The grant from Lloyds TSM will help but we still have a shortfall. We are looking into funding that will help to sustain us and will keep you all up to date with our progress. Of course any advice or assistance would be most welcome. We are delighted to announce that we have just heard that we have been awarded a grant from Awards for All to fund new computer equipment. This will enable us to expand our computer training and set up an internet café in our new premises at RSM Centre.

As we approach the end of our first five years we are humbled at the way the project has grown and developed, the way it is making a real difference to the lives of many of our senior citizens and the support and encouragement we get from so many people in the community. We are looking forward to extending our work through the acquisition of additional rooms kindly given to us by the trustees and committee of Abbeyfield and through encouraging other similar rural groups to set up their own projects.